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Interview with Dean Edward Kocher

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TEMPO INTERVIEWS DEAN EDWARD KOCHER

Over the past decade, Tempo has interviewed Dean Edward Kocher on a variety of topics that provide its readers with a deeper understanding of the Mary Pappert School of Music. In continuing that tradition, we ask Dean Edward Kocher to offer his thoughts on City Music Center, some of his professional service contributions and, with a look to the future, some of the challenges facing the School of Music's students and their families.

Dean Kocher, City Music Center occupies the cover page of Tempo. It seems that the programs are thriving and enthusiasm is running high. Do you agree?

The City Music Center is a cultural gem of our region. Thanks to the vision and excellence of the founder, the late Sally Stone Worsing, City Music Center is a model community-based school with a well-earned reputation for superior quality. Under the energetic and forward-looking leadership of Christopher Bromley, the school is expanding its enrollment and incorporating curricular innovations. The students of the City Music Center represent the future of music. Some of the students will continue their studies in preparation for a professional career in music. More importantly, we know from experience that alumni from the City Music Center will achieve a broad range of professional and personal successes and become the next generation of concert goers, subscribers, board members and parents who will, in turn, offer their children the same opportunity to study music from highly qualified and passionate teachers.

Your professional service contributions as an accreditation

commissioner take you off campus for several weeks each year. Please describe your work.

I am currently serving in my second and final term on the Commission for Accreditation for the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The duties of the 18 elected commissioners are to apply the accreditation and membership standards of the association for over 600 baccalaureate and graduate institutions and programs. The commission receives applications and determines the qualifications of institutions seeking membership and, after thorough examination in accordance with association procedures, takes action on behalf of the association. The commission also has the power to investigate the maintenance of standards and the observance of published commitments in any member institution under its jurisdiction. Commission members must have had experience as visiting evaluators. Accreditation is voluntary, and the standards are determined and continuously refined through a rigorous process and dialogue of the membership.

When does the Commission meet?

There are two meetings each year. The fall meeting occurs in the week preceding the association's November annual meeting. That meeting is held at different locations throughout the United States. The spring meeting occurs in June near the headquarters of the NASM national office in Reston, Virginia. Even though the workload for the commissioners is formidable, the meetings are highly productive and rewarding, owing to the splendid preparation and support of the association's professional staff.



Dean Kocher, do you perform any other service related to accreditation?

Every year, I travel to a distant campus in the role of visiting evaluator. Visiting evaluators are the "eyes and ears" of the commission. Prior to the visit, we become familiar with the self-study documents and then verify those documents through the site visits. There is a large volume of material to cover on the visits, so the pace is rapid and the time commitment intense. Each visit culminates with a written report that is sent to the national office and forwarded to the institution. The accreditation process is enormously helpful for improving student learning opportunities and the spirit of kindness and good will on behalf of students always cheers me. Currently, in the United States, there are well over 100,000 students studying music at accredited music programs.

How does your accreditation service inform your leadership as the chief academic officer of the Mary Pappert School of Music?

The opportunity to read dozens of thoughtful and comprehensive membership applications provides a stimulating opportunity to survey best practice in our industry and consider new possibilities. It is helpful to discover effective creative approaches that inspire student learning. Regarding our music programs at Duquesne, my travels elsewhere remind me of some of the unique advantages of a Duquesne education. Our mission, "Duquesne serves God by serving students" provides a commonality for all faculty and staff that pervades our work. The advantages of Pittsburgh's cultural richness provide enormous benefits to our students. Every undergraduate music major studies privately with a performing artist of international repute. Our student ensembles are superb,

as are the academic programs in musicianship, music education, music technology, music therapy and sacred music. Duquesne's long-standing tradition of excellence in the liberal arts is a solid underpinning for all of the degree programs and for life-long learning. Even though my professional service gives me the opportunity to visit many fine music programs, at the end of the day there is no place like home. And Duquesne's Mary Pappert School of Music is a great place to call home.

Dean Kocher, as an academic administrator you work closely with students and their families. As you look to the future, what challenges are facing our students and their families?

More than ever, parents are concerned about post-collegiate employment opportunities for their children. Traditionally, the liberal arts, fine arts and performing arts degrees

translate into lower starting salaries compared to business or health care fields. The cost of attending college is a topic of national discussion and concern, and a daunting challenge for both public and private institutions. At Duquesne, we are expanding our Music Career Services office to improve internship opportunities, increase connections with alumni and refine job placement tracking. Regarding the cost of studying music at Duquesne, we give close attention to academic advising and continually monitor our curriculum to serve our students well through relevant learning experiences that will help them achieve their professional aspirations in a timely fashion. As ever, we reach out to our friends and supporters to help us provide scholarships for talented students with financial need. That is a time-honored tradition at Duquesne, and toward that honorable goal we remain committed to serving God by serving students.

SUPPORT THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The Mary Pappert School of Music offers many opportunities for your generosity to make a real difference for the next generation of great musicians:

Dean's Discretionary Fund
Music Performance Fund
Music Education Fund
Music Technology Fund
Music Therapy Fund
Sacred Music Fund
Music Scholarship Fund
Music School Endowment
Sidney and Teresa Harth Violin Scholarship
Nicholas Jordanoff Jazz Trumpet Scholarship
City Music Center

Sidney and Teresa Harth Violin Scholarship

Sidney Harth was a man dedicated to community through performance and to students through education. Sidney held the position of Director of Orchestral Activities at Duquesne, drawing from his life-long experiences as performer, concertmaster and conductor of many world-class orchestras to provide an inspirational and practical education for students. The creation of this scholarship continues the legacy he established, providing future violin students the opportunity to refine their skills and lead a life of dedicated and passionate musicianship.

City Music Center

City Music Center is the Community Music division of the Mary Pappert School of Music. Their mission involves providing a quality education to any interested student, regardless of their ability to pay. This year, CMC provided over \$45,000 in financial aid to deserving families, including several full scholarships to students involved in the Pittsburgh Chamber Society's *Poco a Poco* program. Your donation will help provide even more support to young musicians in the Pittsburgh area.

SEND CHECKS TO:

**The Mary Pappert School of Music
Duquesne University
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282**

Your donation is tax-deductible. To learn more about giving, call Mary Frances Dean at 412.396.4980.